

DISTRICT V ADVISORY BOARD

Minutes

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October 2, 2006

7:00 p.m.

Auburn Hills Golf Course Clubhouse

443 S. 135th West

Nine (9) District Advisory Board Members attended the District V Advisory Board meeting. Also in attendance was three (3) City staff. Approximately 8 members of the public were present with 3 signing the sign-in sheet.

Members Present

Dave Almes
Bob Bulman
Dave Dennis
Maurice Ediger
Jerry Hoggatt
Andy Johnson
John Marker
Clarke Sandberg
DeAnn Sullivan
Council Member Bob Martz

Members Absent

Ann Wellborn

Staff Present

Mary K Vaughn, Housing & Community Services
Deborah Doss, Housing & Community Services
Dana Brown, City Manager's Office

Guests

Bryan Frye, 1309 Ridge Port, 67205
Ken Holmes, 2246 Columbine/Benjamin Hills
Lance Garcia, 9730 W. 37th Street North, 67205

Call to Order

Council Member Bob Martz called the meeting to order at 7:06. He asked the public to wait until given the opportunity to speak on agenda items during the Board's review. He asked persons to be courteous and refrain from debating or making disrespectful comments or actions while others were speaking.

The Council Member then asked for approval of the minutes for the September 11, 2006. The minutes were approved as written by a vote of 8-0. The agenda for the meeting was changed to omit the Police report as officers were called away for the Bombardier strike.

Staff Reports

None provided.

New Business

StopBlight

Mary K. Vaughn, Housing & Community Services, presented an overview of a proposed program to address blighted properties in the neighborhoods including five strategies: 1) acquiring tax-delinquent properties; 2) resources to purchase and rehab; 3) strengthening boarded/abandoned building policies; 4) requiring a property agent registration; and, 5) creating a means to acquire and "bank" land for reuse. Vaughn focused on strategies #3 & #4, reviewing the proposed revisions to City codes, Chapter 20 on Housing Code and Chapter 30 on Vacant & Neglected Buildings. The major change to the Housing Code minimum penalties and escalating penalties for repeat offenders.

Chapter 30 is a new chapter and includes a requirement for vacant and neglected buildings to be registered under certain conditions. She added that the City is working with the County on speeding up the process to sell abandoned properties in which taxes have been delinquent for two years and unoccupied continuously for preceding 180 days. The purpose is to rehab the properties quicker for home ownership.

DAB Members expressed concerns for special situations including an elderly neighbor who doesn't live in her house but her children take her there occasionally to "visit" as the family is not ready to sell; ownership of two houses in the neighborhood in which one is uninhabited but well kept; and, summer/winter homes which property owners occupy during a particular season but not year round. Another issue was whether Wichita Independent Business Association (WIBA), Wichita Area Builders Association (WABA), and rental property groups had been involved in developing the proposed revisions. A third issue was how hardship cases would be handled and whether resources existed to assist home owners with resolving the violations.

Vaughn answered most of the questions by explaining provisions for addressing each situation by registration including development of a plan for the property. She also pointed out a proposed diversion program for first-time offenders. Staff explained that if a property is maintained, it won't be cited for violations. Vaughn also said that certain assistance programs are available in the areas of the Neighborhood Revitalization Area and others in the Local Investment Area including a tax rebate program for building residential and non-residential structures in certain areas. Other programs are eligible citywide such as emergency loans up to \$5,000 which are forgiven after five years and home repair loans in which half of the loan can be forgiven under certain circumstances.

A question was presented by the **Board** on differences from the presentation and the agenda report for proposed revisions to Chapter 30.01.020 on the definition of vacant buildings requiring registration. **Vaughn** will clarify and provide the information to staff for distribution to the DAB.

Vaughn talked briefly about the START portion of the program—the StopBlight Action Response Team which will provide a comprehensive pro-active interdepartmental approach to eliminate blight and other neighborhood nuisances. A current example of this program includes the efforts to address Beat 44 area in northeast Wichita. Police have conducted a survey of the residents in the area and certain programs have been developed by the Neighborhood City Hall interdepartmental staff to work with residents on issues identified. **Staff** further explained that a beautification award is given monthly at the DAB I meeting house, landscaping, lawn, etc. In addition, some sessions have been held for working with landlords, doing simple home repairs, etc.

Overall, the **Board** appeared to support the proposed registration and the plan for improved efforts to address blighted areas. However, concerns was expressed about the current wording that fines could be "up to" \$1,000 with no minimum, leaving a judge to impose a very high fine for a first time offender. Some felt that the judges should be involved in this revision process to consider mandatory minimum fines. Examples of properties were cited in District V that might fall into these descriptions. **Vaughn** mentioned that the proposed changes had been presented to the judges and that the major feedback was how to handle hardship cases.

Members of the public spoke about concerns. **Lance Garcia, Rental Properties, Inc.**, expressed concern for the registration fees, feeling they were too high. **Ken Holmes, also with Rental Properties, Inc.** spoke in support of efforts to reduce blight because the value of other homes in the neighborhood are diminished as a result. He said landlords have more at stake than the individual property owner. Holmes expressed a great deal of support for the Office of Central Inspection staff and Kurt Schroeder, Superintendent. He said if he knew that Schroeder would always be in that

position, he would have no objections because the staff is exceptional to work with on housing issues, being very flexible with rental property owners in allowing sufficient time & support for repairing violations. Landlords must deal with bad tenants. Holmes said he would like to see criminal or other codes enforced, giving an example of person allowed by a police officer to install an illegal type of siding while the officer visited the person on site in process of the installation.

Holmes said he thought the proposal attacks the property owner with fines that include imprisonment. Having a plan for a vacant property was good, however, because Schroeder would handle reasonably. He stated that he doesn't understand why registration is necessary, though, or why problems exist with keeping the County property records updated. Overall, Homes said societal problems like drugs, gangs, etc. just need to be resolved.

Council Member Martz expressed concern for situations in which police or staff knowingly allows violations to exist. He also expressed some frustration with the blighted property issues that commonly exist and which this proposed effort would address as every district experiences these to some degree.

Action: Comment provided for concerns with general support for proposed efforts to better address blighted properties.

Neighborhood Revitalization Area Boundary

Deborah Doss, Housing & Community Services, presented the recommendation from the Neighborhood Revitalization Area Task Force for changes to the HUD and State Neighborhood Revitalization Area and the City's Local Investment Areas. Members of the Task Force included representatives of USD 259, Sedgwick County, and City departments. Requirements for recommending addition of an area include identifying the area with a substantial presence of deteriorated or dilapidated buildings and, through the HUD Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy, an area designated as primarily residential containing a high percentage of low and moderate-income households.

Doss explained that a Revitalization Plan must be created with strategies to increase economic vitality; enhance physical appearance; and improve the quality of life for residents. HUD incentives focus on jobs, housing, and economic development. The Kansas Incentive includes the tax rebate program (K.S.A. 12-17, 114-118) for residential properties of single-family (SF) and multi-family (MF); and commercial, industrial, and historic properties.

The Task Force recommended adding the boundaries designated in the South Central Neighborhood Plan including Kellogg on north, Arkansas River on the south and west, and Washington and the railroad tracks from Pawnee to the Arkansas River on the east. Since the current NRA boundary includes the north half of the South Central Plan area, the new boundary recommended would add the southern half of the SC Plan.

Any properties within the NRA developed with new construction or rehabilitation projects are eligible for the State of Kansas Tax Rebate Program. The rebate amount is based on the value of the building permit and is established for five (5) years, subject to the guidelines of 95% of the incremental tax increase for SF properties; 75% of same increase for non-residential and MF properties; and 95% of same increase for historical properties.

Comments from Board Members included suggestions that the City consider more incentive programs for development and renovation and that re-development of the core area is hindered by

the expense to property owners such as water and sewer improvements. **Vaughn** indicated that such incentives are currently available and she would provide a summary along with other promised information.

Action: Board was generally supportive of the recommendations for new boundary areas with comments regarding increased incentives for developing and improving properties.

Public Agenda

This portion of the agenda provides an opportunity for citizens to present items not shown as part of the regular meeting agenda.

None presented.

Board Agenda

Updates, Issues, and Reports

Report on activities, events, or concerns in the neighborhoods and/or District V.

Council Member Martz announced two upcoming meetings:

- (1) Public Comment Session, Tuesday, October 24 – I-235 Exits on Kellogg & Central, Sedgwick Co. Ext. Building, 5-7 p.m.; and,
- (2) Public Comment Session, October 26 – Connect with Community, “Revitalized Efforts to Address Neighborhood Blight,” City Hall, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

DAB Members

- (1) Several trees have died that were planted as part of the 13th Street Bridge Project just west of 119th Street
- (2) A tree at the Lost Creek entrance in the right of way area is a visual hindrance for seeing vehicles going north on 119th when exiting the Lost Creek area.
- (3) A pothole on the south side of the 119th & Maple intersection (even with Curves fitness center) needs more in-fill. Other members thought the hole had been filled satisfactorily.

Action: Staff will check on items of concern.

With no further items, the meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

The next meeting for District Advisory Board V will be scheduled at Auburn Hills Clubhouse at **7:00 p.m. on November 6, 2006**, the regular meeting date of first Monday of the month.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dana Brown, Neighborhood Assistant
City Council District V